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S E C R E T STATE 018863

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2019  
TAGS: KPKO, PREL, PHUM, UNSC, CG, IN  
SUBJECT: URGENT DEMARCHE: THREATENED INDIAN PEACEKEEPER  
WITHDRAWAL FROM THE DRC

Classified By: AF Acting A/S Karl Wycoff, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

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1. (SBU) The Department requests Embassy Kinshasa seek a meeting as soon as possible with President Kabila to urge him to issue a statement in support of the Indian peacekeeping contingent in the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC). The Department similarly requests Embassies Brussels, London and Paris, as well as the U.S. Missions to the African Union (USAU) and the European Union (USEU), raise this situation with host government/organization counterparts and encourage them likewise to press the Congolese for such a statement. Please see paras 5-9 for background and supporting information to meet Department objectives. Embassy New Delhi should note, per para 10, that the UN has specifically asked the USG not to raise this issue with the Indian government at this time, although it may be necessary to do so at a later date.

#### OBJECTIVES (KINSHASA)

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2. (SBU) The Department instructs Embassy Kinshasa to pursue the following objectives:

- Inform President Kabila we understand the Government of India is planning to withdraw its troops from MONUC;
- Outline the very negative effects this decision would have on the security and humanitarian situations in the DRC;
- Urge President Kabila to issue a strong public statement in support of India's participation in MONUC, with the goal of staving off an Indian withdrawal.
- Urge President Kabila to engage in direct talks with the Government of India to improve bilateral relations and reach an agreement allowing the Indians to remain.

#### OBJECTIVES (OTHER ACTION ADDRESSEES)

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3. (SBU) The Department instructs Embassies Brussels, London and Paris, as well as USAU and USEU, to pursue the following objectives:

- Inform appropriate host government/organization officials the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has told Ambassador Rice the Government of India plans to withdraw its troops from MONUC;

-- Outline the very negative effects this decision would have on the security and humanitarian situations in the DRC;

-- Urge local officials to engage with the Congolese government, through either the resident DRC ambassadors or other channels they may deem appropriate, in favor of a strong positive statement from President Kabila in support of India's participation in MONUC.

-- Urge local officials to engage with the Congolese government in favor of direct bilateral talks between the DRC and India, with the goal of reaching an agreement allowing the Indians to remain.

#### DEPARTMENT ACTION

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4. (SBU) AF Acting Assistant Secretary Wycoff delivered the points in para 2 above to DRC Ambassador to the United States Faida Mitifu on the afternoon of Friday, February 27. Ambassador Mitifu replied that she would immediately speak with the DRC Permanent Representative to the United Nations and urge him to be in contact with DPKO.

#### REPORTING DEADLINE

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5. (U) All posts should report the results of their efforts by cable to IO/PSC Heather Von Behren and AF/C Christopher Lamora no later than Friday, March 6.

#### BACKGROUND

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6. (S) UN Under Secretary General Le Roy informed Ambassador Rice on February 26 that DPKO had received a note verbale from India stating all Indian troops would be withdrawn. India assured DPKO its withdrawal would be gradual, but the effect will nonetheless be catastrophic.

7. (SBU) India is the largest single Troop-Contributing Country participating in MONUC, providing 4,571 troops (nearly 25% of the total 18,411). India has also contributed 23 of MONUC's 30 total helicopters. MONUC is already struggling to fulfill its extensive mandate, which focuses on the protection of Congolese civilians. For this reason the Security Council in November approved a 3,000-troop increase

to the MONUC force. Those additional troops have now been identified, but it may be several months before the first of them actually deploy to the DRC. A withdrawal of Indian troops and helicopter assets would be absolutely devastating to MONUC's ability to carry out its mandate. The humanitarian crisis in the DRC would undoubtedly worsen and gains made by the recent joint DRC-Rwandan operation against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) could quickly evaporate.

8. (U) The Indian troops have had a rough time in the DRC. Some have been accused of human rights violations against the local population, including an accusation by a UN oversight body that some Indian troops were involved in a child prostitution ring in the DRC's troubled North Kivu province in late 2007 and early 2008. The Indian government promised its own thorough investigation and to bring to justice those found guilty. The international media have accused other Indian peacekeepers in the DRC of illegally exporting DRC natural resources and allegedly selling arms to rebels in exchange for minerals. UN investigators have acknowledged evidence of some limited trading in gold but not in arms. These accounts are public and are included in the Department of State 2008 Human Rights Report on the DRC that was released on February 25, 2009.

9. (S) India is the main force in North Kivu and thus took the brunt of anti-MONUC sentiment in the region last fall when the GDRC agitated the population into blaming MONUC for the continuing insecurity. DRC President Kabila sent a letter to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in November asking that the planned MONUC troop increase include no additional Indians. DPKO responded that the DRC could not pick and choose from which contributing countries MONUC forces would come without solid justification, which the GDRC did not provide. India has since sought a public statement of support from Kabila, which has not been forthcoming, and it seems the GOI has determined it has no desire to continue placing its troops in harm's way in a country where they are not wanted. Secretary-General Ban will see President Kabila on February 28 in Goma, DRC, and plans to urge him to openly support India's troops.

10. (S) Under Secretary General Le Roy has requested U.S. assistance by intervening with President Kabila. The UN will be approaching the GOI separately. Le Roy asked that the USG not approach the Indians directly at this time.

CLINTON